

RETAINING THE CODE

Comments in the FCC Proceedings:

RM-10781
RM-10782
RM-10783
RM-10784
RM-10787

Amateur Radio is not just a mental exercise. True, certain minimum metal skills are needed, to master the art. And, the various FCC amateur licenses require increasing levels of demonstrable knowledge. However, knowledge is not the only thing that has traditionally required demonstration.

Amateur Radio is about communicating. It has always required demonstrable ability to communicate. That's what the Morse Code requirement was for. The ability to send and receive Morse Code was the single communication skill that could be demonstrated, when testing for a license. All the rest of the paperwork testing could be accomplished by persons having no ability to actually communicate.

Even the high-tech project of putting men on the moon and bringing them back required Morse Code. That's right, the astronauts' last line of communication, after loss of high-gain antenna, after loss of power amplifier, and even after loss of the output stages of the exciter, was 500-milliwatt Morse Code. The astronauts, being pilots, knew Morse Code. Pilots, today, still need Morse Code, to identify radio navigational aids. Morse Code is not a dead language, as many would have us believe.

Amateur Radio is not just about having fun. It's not just a hobby. One of its justifying characteristics is its ability to provide communication in emergencies. Today, post-9/11, that ability is even more important. And, today's last-ditch backup communication, in emergencies, is still Morse Code. Today, after the cell-phone network has crashed, after the telephone service has failed, after the electrical power network has failed, after the high-gain antenna has fallen, when the static crashes make low-power voice an impossibility, and when emergency communication is required in real time, Morse Code is still there ... and it will work, provided the radio operator knows it.

Please retain the 5 WPM Morse Code requirement for the Amateur Radio licenses that carry High Frequency privileges.

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